

BiMo: Bilingualism in Monolingual Contexts

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BiMo (Bilingualism in Monolingual Contexts) is a research and innovation EU funded project (2020-1-ES01-KA201-081917) that delves into the needs of the main stakeholders involved in bilingual programmes: school administrators, teachers and families. BiMo centers on one of these groups that undoubtedly plays a prominent role in this issue of learning a foreign language and which, however, is often left out of the decision-making organizational circles and also of the academic research that is carried out on the achievements of bilingual education programmes, that is, families.

Parents must constantly make decisions regarding the education of their children (at what age to start learning a second language, how to do it, what educational center to choose, etc.) and in the vast majority of cases it is not an informed decision as parents do not know in advance what it really means to join a bilingual education programme. This situation is particularly serious in the case of societies with a monolingual tradition in which parents, because they do not have prolonged contact with situations of bilingualism/multilingualism in any of its aspects, are liable to make uninformed decisions about the education of their children based on mere impressions and partial information from the social environment.

The objective of BiMo project is to deepen the views, impressions and needs of the families in monolingual societies with implemented bilingual education programmes, and to establish synergies from societies with greater experience in everyday bilingualism and bilingual education programmes in a foreign language. Thus, it is expected to set in motion several lines of action to allow the transfer of information and sharing of experiences between typically bilingual social contexts (in Lithuania and Romania) towards typically monolingual social contexts (in Spain and Italy).

The implementation of this project will contribute to the development of necessary competencies so that the secondary school management teams, bilingual programme coordinators, and teachers in bilingual secondary schools following a CLIL-based model can inform and help families before they enroll their children in bilingual schools. BiMo, following a bottom-up approach, looks into the matter and tries to find solutions for the current situation in monolingual contexts in places like Spain and Italy, where teachers and families are starting to question the positive effects of CLIL programs for the cognitive development of youngsters and their capacities in their first language.

BiMo conducts research in four European countries and will innovate bilingual/multilingual education by producing outstanding free-access resources (MOOCs, a Policy Recommendation Book and a collection of best practice sources).

The purpose of this presentation will be to present BiMo project and enrich the academic discussion on the role of families in bilingual education programs across Europe.

<https://bimo.pixel-online.org/>